

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000832

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#) [CU](#) [BO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH MFA FOCUSES "LESSONS LEARNED" ASSISTANCE ON CUBA AND BELARUS

REF: PRAGUE 814

1. Summary: The Czech MFA office designed to promote democratic transformations based on Czech experience is now in its first year of operation. Priority areas for activity are Belarus and Cuba, with the office supporting other MFA assistance in Iraq; future targets are Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Burma. Working largely through NGOs, the office aims to support development of the civil society through written materials, visits to the CR, seminars, and direct support to local NGOs. The Czechs are planning to begin coordination of assistance with V4 partners, and welcome cooperation with other institutions, including from the U.S.

2. The Czech MFA's Office of Transformation Cooperation came into existence last year. Headed by Gabriela Dlouha and under the patronage of Deputy Foreign Minister (and future Ambassador to the United States) Petr Kolar -- both veterans of former President Vaclav Havel's staff -- the office aims to add a new element to Czech diplomacy, funding NGOs and direct efforts to promote democratic transformations based on lessons learned in the Czech Republic. The office has a modest budget of 14 million crowns (USD 600,000) for 2005, and expects this to increase to 20 million crowns next year. While some projects the office handles (mainly those funded by other sources) have specific budgets, Dlouha does not currently have a country-specific breakdown of activity to date (below).

3. The office works closely with Czech NGOs, particularly People in Need, and with select NGOs in target countries. According to Dlouha, her office coordinates with the MFA's Office of Development Assistance, as well as the Human Rights Office and the country desks. But Dlouha notes that unlike development assistance, which the MFA coordinates with the formal input of ten other Czech ministries, her office's assistance comes under the exclusive purview of the MFA. (Note: septel will discuss Czech government plans to meet new EU targets for development assistance.)

4. During a discussion on May 26, Dlouha discussed the priorities and current and future activities of the office.

#### Belarus

-----

With Presidential elections due next year, Dlouha described Belarus as her top priority. Activity to date focuses on bringing young Belarusians to the CR for exposure and training, offering support to local NGOs, and translating material (see below). On the former, the office is currently offering seminars in the CR for young people (with People in Need), and planning a "summer school for young scientists" which will take place in cooperation with a French group. In terms of local NGOs, Dlouha said none have yet been selected for cooperation. Dlouha described the experience to date as good, with selected participants having no trouble traveling to Prague, although she fears a backlash at some point.

#### Cuba

-----

Support for the dissident movement on the island is a leading MFA priority (reftel and septel). Projects funded by Dlouha's office to date include an (unspecified) effort to support the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba, supporting an upcoming University of Miami/Institute of Cuban Studies seminar on "the transformation process and lessons learned," translating short thematic studies/essays on the lessons learned from the Czech transformation (these are being commissioned by the MFA and will also be translated into Belorussian and possibly other languages; they will be distributed primarily through Czech embassies), and making other (unspecified) contributions to a network of independent libraries. Another possible area for support is a study in Cuba and the CR on the "psychological aspects of transformation." Dlouha noted that her office's activities in Cuba are complemented by work done through People in Need and the independent efforts of Vaclav Havel and others. As an aside, Dlouha said that the Club of Madrid, bringing together former statesman to discuss Cuban developments, was likely to meet in Prague in November (Prague was the site of an ICDC meeting last September).

#### Iraq

-----

Dlouha's office is coordinating a GOCR-funded program (with

40 million crown budget for 2005-06, which comes from a separate account for Iraqi assistance), together with People in Need, to train Iraqi NGOs in both Jordan and Iraq. As part of this effort the MFA is translating into Arabic and English a Czech "workbook" on NGO management. The MFA is also funding training of Iraqi judges at the Prague-based CEELI Institute. And they are cooperating with the Charles University economic institute CERGE-EI on internships for Czech (and Afghan) students, at a budget of 56 million crowns for 2005-09 (also funded from outside her office).

Future targets: Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova, Burma

-----  
Dlouha's young office has limited its early activity, but planning is underway for projects in other countries. In Ukraine the office is considering a project on transformation of the security services (together with the Prague Security Studies Institute). The office wants to support other MFA priorities, in which the Balkans figure prominently: Dlouha is investigating a program to support military reform and NATO integration in Serbia. Moldova is another MFA priority, and the Czechs will open an embassy there this summer. In coordination with the EU action plan for Moldova, Dlouha is looking for local NGOs with which she can cooperate on a suitable project. Finally, Dlouha hopes to launch some activity in Burma, but has nothing on the immediate horizon.

V4 coordination and other international cooperation

-----  
Dlouha acknowledged there is a great deal of common ground with other governments/NGOs in the region. She is hosting in Prague in early June the first meeting of Visegrad 4 partners (CR, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary) devoted solely to the issue of transformation assistance. Dlouha said she has discussed possible cooperation with the German Marshall Fund, and is ready to cooperate with other partners.

HILLAS